

# NO

## TIME TO WASTE ON

# WARMING

By Peter Goldmark

The sea level is rising and the clock is ticking. It's time to come to our senses about **global warming**.

The concentration of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere increases relentlessly, but slowly. The greatest asset we have in dealing with it is time: time to phase in carbon limits carefully, time to make sure we don't burden the economy with emergency measures, and time to work out agreements with other countries — since this is one of those new global problems where either we all succeed in addressing it together or we all suffer severe consequences separately.

In the United States, we've been squandering that time with a senseless and paralyzing argument about whether global warming is real and if so, man-made.

The fact is that virtually all American climate scientists agree that global warming is happening, and the vast majority conclude that most of it is driven by human activities.

The overwhelming majority of climate scientists around the world concur. More than a dozen distinguished and independent national science academies in various countries have studied this issue, and not one of them — that's right, not one — doubts that global warming is a serious, man-made threat.

Past objections to the reality and danger of man-made global warming have turned out to be based on bad data or faulty interpretations. The deniers — many of whom are not in fact climate scientists — keep raising objections that, as the years roll by, are proven wrong.

Let's bring one simple part of this home to our own backyards. Sea-level rise is a worldwide phenomenon; in the United States, by far the most vulnerable state is Florida. But Louisiana, California, New York and New Jersey are also particularly vulnerable, according to a research team headed by Benjamin Strauss of Climate Central, an organization that disseminates research on global warming.

"Sea level rise is like an invisible tsunami, building force while we do almost nothing," says Strauss. At the website [Sealevel.climatecentral.org](http://Sealevel.climatecentral.org), you can enter a location and get a rough estimate of how vulnerable it is to rising sea levels over the next decade. It's a computer model that projects the present rate of sea-level rise through 2020, and displays that on a map of low-lying coastal areas. It shows that Nassau is the most vulnerable county in the state. The most vulnerable municipality is New York City, followed by a string of places on Long Island: Long Beach, Oceanside, Freeport and Massapequa.

It's hard to explain to people from other countries why the United States is caught in this paralysis and why, with no serious evidence to support the deniers, so many Americans withhold support for action.

For most of the 20th century, the United States was a leader in areas where science was important: nuclear and space research, the Internet, and the "green revolution," which helped hundreds of millions around the world feed themselves rather